Child marriage in Bihar

†1478. SHRI SHATRUGHAN SINHA: Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn towards the news reports in which it has been stated that a large number of child marriages were solemnized on occasion of 'Akshay Tritiya' in Bihar;

(b) whether any report has been sought from the State Government in this regard; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government for prevention of child marriage and to ascertain the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The State Government has been requested to give information if any such child marriages were solemnized.

(c) In order to prohibit the practice of Child Marriage, appropriate amendments have been proposed in the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 and the Bill is under process for submission to Cabinet. Also, awareness generation and sensitization programmes are being undertaken for this purpose. The National Commission for Women has also requested State Governments, to take earnest steps by strong administrative action and creation of awareness to prevent child marriages.

Spreading of Aids

†1479. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are fully aware of the fact that AIDS can transmit from one to another person;

(b) if so, whether prostitutes are also responsible for this to a great extent;

(c) whether Government are contemplating to impose blanket ban on this trade; and

(d) if so, by when and details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) As per information furnished by the National Aids Control Organisation, the known modes of transmission of HIV/AIDS from person to person are through unprotected sex with an infected person, transfusions of infected blood and from mother of child during pregnancy and child birth. The mode of transmission among injectible drug users is through sharing of needles. As per Sentinel Surveillance 2005, the HIV positivity among commercial sex workers has been found to be 8.4%, whereas in the general population, the positivity is less than 1%. It can, therefore, be concluded that commercial sex workers are major transmitters of this disease.

(c) and (d) The proposed amendments to the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1956, seek to prevent trafficking in women and children for prostitution by incorporating stringent punishment for traffickers who recruit, transfer, harbour or receive a person for the purpose of prostitution. The Bill was introduced in Lok Sabha on 22nd May, 2006 and is now under the examination of the Ministry related Parliamentary Standing Committee.

Swayam Siddha Scheme

1480. SHRI K.B. SHANAPPA: Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the proposal for release of funds under Swayam Siddha Scheme is pending with Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the amount would be released?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) to (c) The Scheme of Swayam Siddha is implemented through State Governments and funds are released to State Governments on the basis of Annual Action Plans. No proposal is pending with Ministry of Women and Child Development as on 31.7.2006 under the Scheme of Swayam Siddha for release of funds to State Governments based on Annual Action Plans.

Funds under Balika Samridhi Yojana

1481. SHRI K.B. SHANAPPA: Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the proposal for release of funds under Balika Samridhi Yojana is pending with Government;